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2

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WOODWIND
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The Allman Brothers photograph in the last issue of Woodwind was taken by Ira M. Winitzky.

November 30, 1971

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We've got the books, if you've got the time. We need reviewers in all areas, but especially people who are into gay lib, women's lib, leftist politics, and fine arts. Call Judy Willis at 979-5179 or call Woodwind.

Socialist Education Conference



Friday, Dec. 10

8pm-"Is Chile Going Socialist?"; Peter Camejo

Saturday, Dec. 11

11am-"Marxism and the Struggle for Black Self-Determination";

2pm-"Feminism and the Abortion Movement";

4pm-"Youth and the Socialist Campaign in '72 John Hawkins, national coordinator of Young Socialists for Jenness and Pulley

Sunday, Dec. 12

11am-"The Wage Freeze and the Crisis of U.S. Imperialism"; Dick Roberts

2pm-"High Schools in Revolt"; a panel of high school activists

4pm-"How to Make a Revolution in the U.S.";

at George Washington U.

Friday: Gov't Hall, room 100, 21&G St. N.W.

Saturday: Student Center, room 410-415, 21&H St. N.W.

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Poetry

DEIRDRA BALDWIN

Hospital Zone

today the ghosting girls
coasted the hall chatting
the chairs unrolled the flat white
paper corridoor
the gliding old faces beamed on
past the pulmonary pump & wringer buckets
the wheeling meals and bodies
they soar cared for
understand perfectly why they are
the familiar unfamiliar blotched
face of a nurse smiles
she turns remembering an oversight
& spongy, walks
while black bobby pins
three of them
hold winged cap askew and nylon lathers
the clean dry hands of a doctor
touch everywhere
can slip under beneath the sheet
and reverence the breast & belly
pull flesh from flesh
& leave even the grizzly sisters
naked and aching
they feel his approach on the runway
& pull back
tasting the lingering drug
sweetness with dry tongues,
the powdery rush of air
as he passes
such liver spotted leper love
leaps from those crumpled trammelled
faces
for one another, for the physician,
for the shuffling oily chinned nurse
for the grandchildren with carnations
& the pills & bottles & vials
& the polished silver needles
the day hangs on the edges of the hospital
the lot alternately fills and empties
and huge generators grunt exhausted
gray air into the twilight.
it is chapel and murderously quiet.

Episode

insulated in autumnal smoke
the road flows up
past the detached trees that were
just this summer
interlocked in green patterns
there was the time

of color
the punctuation of brazen sumac
the commonplace art of maples
it passed

the city is rock solid

we rise early in the A. M.
just as the dark and light
pass one another. the dulled vision
at the window is no time at all
the clocks have gone awry with
dizzy faces. there must have been

a power failure in all this
wind. it's the season and when
it starts there's no calm for months
till it dies gradually and the

sifting makes forgetting.
its begun now and hearing follows
the sound up and over and down
and through the creaking casements
the leaves shuffling, the trunks swaying

the tremulous quivering beginnings
the abrupt gushing finale and
the murmuring between the fullness.

Last night i dreamed
you gave me one of those
brooding knock-up fucks

i used to think about
my belly's so heavy
how could i be a suicide

with so many lives to take
i'd be dead
& alive before i started

the breeze you called it
'is dying down' you said

i can hear no difference
see no change in the wrestling dance

i see you go outside ducking back into
the blast till your face is burning.

all the mums are rusting
at the edge of the garden

there's not a good one left
among them but they were

respectively yellow, orange
and white a week ago.
I picked four bunches and
placed them in the house
the greeny stems are souring
i'll hate to throw them out

they are the last.

what can you bring indoors in winter
but the cats
who'd rather be outside?

later we went out to shoot
you were torn between the gun
and camera
crossing the creek was my
dilemma and having to hold on.

you sleep tangled in the
throes of rumpled blankets
dinner wine growing stale
beside the bed, a homey
debauchery. mile's away the city's

still awake
throwing liquor down
and slipping around a pair
of steamy thighs
a high wind here

a house on a hill
with no lights on save one
alone
keeping the darkness out
and the night alive.

One Would

one would think the birds
with their love of freedom
would not traffic together

but gathering in the bare tree
they are quick to startle
quick to flee

spinning and turning in the
confused air as this old car
rounds the bend and creeps up

over the hill. an explosion of wings
flying things trying to get out from
under one another... i think, my god

the whole orchard's coming apart
and taking off because of me
because of me

bellying along this dull pavement
'i can't touch you i can't follow you'
only an eye getting a head goes where you go

shall i be that eye
with steeled direction
forcing thru the barrel

following you without abandon
to your drooping withering end
stick legs up, alone

& revealed where i can prod
you with a foot and turn you over,
turn you around.

Directions

how green my seed, the day green going down
falling. the seasons fall out of one another
this one, this season breaks with summer
unites with to drop out of the long buried
green winter
the winter slips like a membrane over the cries
of the birds
muffling finally the stiff unfed
& the rest, those other wings fold
and wait.
the sun crashing & splintering the jewelled leaves
lets the green blood.
the bloodless beat out skin drops dry from the tree
quicken & drops quickening.
the ground is cluttered bark, leaf, beetle skin, dead skin
rattling beneath a spider's inching down down
into the cooled ground caves.
above, the pastured animals are
eaten by shadow black desert which is
shifting & nameless.
it lies beyond light, beyond star
there is no distance far nor near
but space
only the small place
only the assuming body's small green space.

SUE TICHY

Northcountry

This lake is something no watercolor brush can capture.
Light reflects from the far shore
and the darkness
has brought the water close to shore,
where before it stretched tree to tree.

The car radio spoke
of built-in obsolescence,
the eternality
of imperfection.

"The only sane course
for the public
in this matter
seems to be..."

But

I am thinking of the lights on the lake,
and how the eager evening star
appears first

in the lightest part of the sky.
The sun rises over the lake
and touches the Western shore first.

In its first light
the tips of the hemlocks
are silver,
and the black-eyed-susans
turn gold,
two colors my camera will not capture.
The flies come out with the sun
and populate the dust.

I have heard
it is a simple explanation.

"Blues
is the expression
of man's inhumanity
to man,

And in this inhuman age..."

I put more wood on my evening fire
and watch bats
on their crepe-paper wings
hunt insects over the water.
I've grown used to mosquitoes and brown water.
I wait in the evening
for the deer
to come timidly down to the lake.

"The drumbeat,"
writes the anthropologist,
"imitates the sound
of the mother's heart."

Here lies the root of everything.

Listen.

The weather grows colder and the fish go deeper.
The fishermen go home weeping
and the highways are impassable.
Caught in the southbound traffic
I watch ducks fly south
in their urgent and reverent vee.

The Co-Pilot's Suicide Note

Eighteen months of training just to be dropped in one shot,
dropped by a flash and the tearing of tree limbs into jungle.
I crawled four miles with a rifle I could have loaded in nine seconds
if I could have coaxed the mud out of the chamber.

We waited, picking bugs out of our chow, for a rescue that
never came, and then we walked out, carrying our pilot,
and you flew over for the ceremonies and cried
when they commended us for courage.

But I didn't die there. I didn't feel the heat of blood
pouring out through my clasped fingers meet the cold of mud pouring in.
I turned no river red with my death. I didn't die
with the soft popcorn sound of bullets in my flesh,

ripping painless mouthfuls of my liver from my side.
There was no cannonade, no gun salute, no flag,
and no black crawling things to come swimming up
the current of the purple spurting tide of my death,

to be small mouths living in my wounds.
And there was not a single comrade to slow a single step
to roll me over, take my ammunition and my cigarettes,
take my bloodstains on his clothes as his farewell.

No, no bullet slammed me into that last hall, and I did not roll in
through the mud like some used-up drunk. I did not wait
through any humming night of insects to get there, listening
to the creeping closer of whatever else was waiting for the closing of my
last door.

No, I turned death on like a stove without a flame, stumbling into the hall,
these words my last flushed contraction, falling there for you to find
rolled against your door, this ragged explanation still crammed into my
throat.

I left you no damage to my room, and no scars for the mortician to repair.

only the gas to turn off and one less mouth to feed.
I left you no gifts, no bloodstains you could use
to speak to me, and nothing that will let you live one
moment longer for having stopped to recognize my silence.

The Cowman's Funeral

He lay wrapped in white,
his folded hands by contrast
brown and gnarled and mountainous. The flowers
did away with the smells of sweat and dung,
and in the faint light of mourning
the creases in his face that had looked rugged
in a prairie sun looked
tired and old.
His few friends,
old men with digitalis in their veins,
pulled roughly at the collars of stiff shirts
fitted forty years before
when the steers and the money and the booze were still flowing
in town.

Their stiffening fingers clawed uneasily
at the hats they held,
drooping, wide-brimmed felt,
sun-faded.

And they could not remember the color of his eyes.
The aunts and the cousins,
came by train after
a telegram from his landlord,
sat motionless, gazing at the preacher,
who found it difficult to eulogize, in the presence of ladies,
a gambling renegade
who drank himself to death
after the ranges were fenced
and the calves were branded by machine.
He managed to say that the deceased
would not be soon forgotten.

Then the brother,
pale and bald,
and come all the way from Tuscon for the day,
stood beside the coffin,
and the mourners shuffled forward
to shake the soft reptilean hand of the old man,
and stare into the open coffin
of dreams.

PERFORMANCE

6

Ned Chaillet

Openings: The Three Cuckolds, a Commedia dell'Arte piece Dec. 2 at American University Theatre
Bob and Ray, the Two and Only, old-time radio wild-men. Nov. 30 at Ford's Theatre.
Curse You, Spread Eagle, sixth edition of the satirical musical revue, Dec. 2 at Washington Theatre Club.
 A new puppet show at the Smithsonian Resident Puppet Theatre opens Dec. 15.

Note: The Proposition, cheerfully recieved on a recent Washington visit, returns to the Smithsonian with five adult and two children's shows beginning Dec. 2. It's an improvisational musical revue guaranteeing "no two shows alike" Student tickets \$3 with I. D.

Ceremonies in Dark Old Men has extended its run at the Back Alley Theatre through Dec. 12.

FUN CITY by Lester Colodny, Joan Rivers and Edgar Rosenberg at the National Theatre

Another unhealthy helping of Masochism a la New York is being dished out in this Broadway-bound comedy of survival in the big city.

Ever since Mayor John Lindsay chose to call New York "Fun City", it's been a standing joke on the late night talk shows and if you watch the opening monologues on Johnny Carson or Dick Cavett, you already know the tone of this show. More than a monologue, though, this is a compendium of television jokes and scenes from "comedy specials" and situation comedies with an occasional word and joke you're not allowed to hear on television.

Jill Fairchild, known to us in television land as Joan Rivers, is a with-it member of every radical movement and an up-and-coming singer whose first record, "Gregorian Hayride", is number one in New York. For seven years she has been living with the less radical Paul Martino, a Juilliard music teacher portrayed by Gabriel Dell.

Life has not been easy for these people. Martino doesn't ever remember where Fairchild stands on issues; he wants to marry her, but she doesn't think it's properly radical, and so on. But at this moment, Christmas Eve, things are looking up. Jill's planned Christmas Day rally to make New York City a state has enlisted support from Lindsay, Shirley Chisholm, Bella Abzug and everyone else worth mentioning; her aforesaid record has garnered her a Las Vegas performance date, and she has managed to buy Martino a \$5,000 violin (which he can play as he moonlights as a restaurant violinist).

The tone is everywhere wrong in this Fun City, and instead of a human comedy about People being assaulted by the City, as we were given by Neil Simon this season in The Prisoner of Second Avenue, we are given an enormous dose of ethnic jokes about Puerto Ricans, Poles and second generation New Yorkers.

Even the time-honored mother-in-law is resurrected as a comic figure, invading the home of Jill and Paul and giving such sage advice as, "Jews don't marry Italians, we buy out fruit from them", in an effort to head off the possible marriage.

Cliche on cliche overpowers the play in its effort to make a complete evening out of its numerous funny lines. What radical singer would be so proud of seven years of monogamy; would even mention it? These are transposed characterizations, taken from time-honored television shows about ordinary people, now given hipper clothes.

Most of the characterizations aren't even transposed, however. There is, I use the word advisedly, a "Polak" super for their apartment, a drunken "polak" super who turns the heat off and on by caprice. The Porter, or Doorman, is a Puerto Rican who understands only what he wants to, and who watches his own uncle strip his car. The police are so stupid that they arrest Paul for robbing his own apartment, with the Puerto Rican porter and don't even recognize the apartment when they return to hear a missing person report on Paul.

Some samples of the play's lines:

"Everybody gets equal justice under the law, Spic!"

"The mayor was furious . . . he said if he had to stay in this shitty city on Christmas, you'd better show up."

"If you didn't toss and turn in your

"If you didn't toss and turn in your sleep we wouldn't have any sex life at all."

A telegram says: "Give it to that mother in Albany."

"Who's that from, Bobby Seale?"

"The first Mrs. Rockefeller."

"I told you to take a cab."

"I took a cab."

"Then who mugged you."

"The cab driver."

It's a shame the play doesn't work better, that it isn't more of a play than a two hour television skit, for there are a number of talented people involved in the production. Joan Rivers is pleasant, though possibly mis-cast in her own play and Gabe Dell is an actor of enormous charm and skill who rarely gets a chance to come across with the human quality that the play needs so much. Though he starts off the evening as a human being, once his hair gets messed up in a mugging he's never human again. And his human quality as an actor helped make the original production of The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window real, as it helped make the elaborate villainy of his role in the under-rated musical Anyone Can Whistle memorable.

Though I despise the elaborate Polish Joke that the play makes of Mr. Ziroka, the super, I greatly appreciate the skill of Louis Zorich in the role. For his cartoon representation, played at a continuous dangerous tilt, is a real model of acting discipline. But then Paul Ford, the Col. Hall of Sgt. Bilko fame, is completely wasted in a cameo walk-on as The Oldest Living Mailman.



Joan Rivers, Renee Lipin and Gabriel Dell

Photograph by Zodiac



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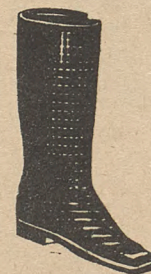
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MAN AND THE MASSES by Ernst Toller
at the University Theatre, University of Maryland

What a great and pleasing surprise is Roger Meersman's elaborate direction of the Expressionist classic, Man and the Masses. Combining elements of style from the Polish Lab Theatre with a sense of the surreal straight from Alfred Jarry, Meersman has provided Washington with a most intriguing piece of theatre.

The play itself is a great and rarely produced work, detailing a woman's search for peace and justice through revolution, and had it been a mediocre production it would have been worth seeing; but Roger Meersman has poured such imagination and energy into the production, and the cast has obviously worked strenuously with such discipline that it's the best piece of local theatre that Washington has produced this year.

That Man and the Masses should appear, of all places, at the University of Maryland, comes as something of a surprise, and my visit there was done more in a spirit of trepidation than anticipation. And, indeed, Toller's celebrated communist vision has been somewhat bowdlerized from Louis Untermeyer's fine translation. As a key instance, the Russian heroine, Sonia Irene L., has become simply the Woman. Though this is minor of itself, it cools the play's evangelistic fervor a degree and is indicative of several other unobtrusive cuttings that keep the production from igniting any passions in the audience, either for or against the message.

Yet the play remains a revolutionary work, a celebration of the workers' as individuals and a sign to the proletariat. Very few of the masses, I might add, managed to see the play in its brief run at the university, though it is dedicated to the proletariat and an audience of workers would have made a better audience for the production than the students and parents who did see the play. Even though the play is meant for the proletariat, it is eloquently a testimonial to the individual Man, or Woman in this case, who struggles heroically against ideological errors made mistakenly in the name of the masses.

The heroine Woman is contrasted to her bourgeois husband, known only as the Man, who betrays her to the State as she plans to lead a strike to shut down the State's war machine. To the Man, "The State is holy", while to the Woman, "Your State makes war; Your State betrays the people."

The conflict between the Man and the Woman infiltrates the play, and the subsequent revolution by the masses, as violent as the wars fashioned by the State, threatens to drive the Woman back to her bourgeois roots when it seems to claim her husband as a victim. Yet, not everything is as it appears in this play, for intermingled with the more or less straightforward expressionistic actions, are the bold strokes of dream pictures drawn across the play's forward action, and in these pictures Meersman unleashes surreal clowns dressed as bankers who manipulate and control the flow of human life as though workers had indeed become cogs in the machine of State. And it is in one of these dream pictures that the revolution murders her husband.

What is actually driving her away from the revolution is the violence of the masses, represented by the Nameless One who urges No Quarter in the war against the State, even as the masses die around him. Though she stands as the force of compromise, of non-violence to the revolutionaries, the State siezes her as the leader of the violent revolution and ultimately executes her.

Meersman's use of a mass of actors who never leave the stage is masterful; in the moments of the masses, with actors drawn in and out of the mob like spectators, he creates moments of magic. Only in his intimate scenes, as in the opening scene between the Man and the Woman, does the play slow down and almost stop. There is a lack of surprising actions there, a point when the play depends on the skills of the individual actors, and not on Meersman's accurate sense of a total mise en scene. And unfortunately for the production the actress portraying the Woman was not vocally up to the peaks she needed to control.

In the contest for the masses between the Nameless One and the Woman her voice doomed her goals, her cry for "Strike!" was lost to the rich tones of the Nameless One crying, "Revolution!" It should have been a more even match. And so it was in her more intimate scenes, the inevitable grinding power of the play stopped by the monotony of her voice.

Outstanding in his few minutes on stage as the Man. Ken Holliday was once again shown to far greater advantage at the University of Maryland, than I have yet seen him with the Folger Theatre Group. His physical grace, like a panther's focused attention on his actions and his actions drew attention once again to the mass of actors, bringing the ensemble actions back to the front.

This play is one of several hundred being considered for the annual College Theatre Festival in Washington, and I can imagine no more distinguished choice than this inventive production, with original exciting music. And it would please my soul to hear the drunken soldiers singing one of the omitted lines, "I troubled the goddamn Bourgeoisie!" at the Kennedy Center.

* * * *

SHAKESPEARE'S MACBETH at Stage One

Macbeth has been an incubator of inspiration in the modern theatre, from providing a framework for Jarry's fantastical Ubu Roi to the intelligent contemporary adaptations of the Performance Group's Macbeth and Charles Marowitz's "a Macbeth". It seems to be a play where well enough cannot be left alone, since what was "well enough" for Elizabethan England tends, in this case, to be too long and boring to modern audiences. So we get modern dress Macbeths, environmental theatre Macbeths and a drastic restructuring of the play and the play's language from Marowitz.

What we get from Stage One is a somewhat un-unified mixture of styles, with costumes schizophrenically expressionist and modern, ancient and casual; and some intermittent textual re-organization, with parts of the Weird Sisters' speeches delivered chorally from the entire cast, and some public speeches turned

private. The ideas in the direction by Gus Kaikkonen are abundant both good and bad, and there are enough good ideas to make the evening worthwhile; the production's greatest problem being its use of too many ideas.

Kaikkonen's use of the small theatre is clever, sounds sometimes enveloping the audience from off-stage, sometimes properly grating, as in the knocking that arouses the drunken Porter after Duncan's murder. Sometimes speeches are too long directed in one direction, dulling the play's progress, as when Lady Macbeth delivered her major sleepwalking soliloquy facing away from me the entire time.

He gets the play off to a promising start, after a somewhat faulty group choral reading of the Witches' opening lines, by placing us in a military field hospital. The Witches have here become Sisters of un-Mercy, nurses tending the wounded in the wars that promote Macbeth to Thane of Cawdor. The bustle, the blood, the grime of battle are abundant and one thinks perhaps a promising total concept will carry this production with its young actors. From time to time the production re-asserts this mood, at other times slipping into forms alien and jarring, even when exciting, as with Macbeth's frenzied second prophecy from the Weird Sisters while he dangles in a rope hammock.

The production values make the evening at Stage One an intermittently enjoyable one, and though the acting seldom rises to the Shakespearean challenge, the play in this production is a good deal more accessible than I've seen it in expensively mounted professional outings, as with Maurice Evans a few years ago.

* * * *

MAN OF LA MANCHA by Dale Wasserman at the National Theatre

By now, this Don Quixote fable has been seen by most people who care about Broadway musicals and what's become important about the play is the actor who interprets Don Quixote - Cervantes. For this outing, one time super-star, singer of "Donkey Serenade", Allan Jones takes the part of the imprisoned Cervantes who acts out his story of Don Quixote to save his manuscript from his fellow prisoners.

Jones was famed once for his tenor voice, and appeared in a great number of films. Perhaps his appearances with the Marx Brothers in A Night at the Opera and A Day at the Races are most often seen nowadays, but it was never as an actor that he triumphed, rather as a singer.

Now that he's a baritone, his triumph is still in his voice, for his Man of La Mancha is the best-sung rendition I have heard. It takes him awhile to get his voice, however, and many of his early lines were lost to me, as were the lines of a number of other performers.

The play itself has claims to being a superior musical on a number of levels. Though the songs of Mitch Leigh and Joe Darion are not classics, with the possible exception of "The Quest", better known as "The Impossible Dream", they are better integrated into the text than the songs of most musicals. In addition, the musical is couched within a double fantasy of a play within a play and there are few of the assumed illusions we are usually asked to tolerate.

None of the play's awareness of its own theatricality will detract from the pleasure of sentimentalists, either. For at the Don Quixote death scene, a moment after we are reminded that we are watching a play by the play itself, the audience is filled with tearful people clutching at the vanishing notes of "The Impossible Dream" in reprise.

Jones passes the test of "The Impossible Dream" beautifully and though his Cervantes is a little stiff, his Don Quixote is fairly well fleshed out and moving, but, perhaps a little too infirm. From time to time in the evening, though, it seemed to me I would enjoy Jones more away from that impending Inquisition staircase than I enjoyed him under its dominance.

An evening of Allan Jones, with clips from his films flashing in back of him while he sang and entertains us, might be the best way to see him. It would be nice if somebody would prepare such an evening and bring him back to the National. With Allan Jones, somebody could bring us the real thing, instead of evenings of pseudo-30's nostalgia influenced by the Marx Brothers and Allan Jones.

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THE Most BEAUTIFUL SIGN IN THE WORLD

by
toby thompson



See Al's Auto Transmission sign: See her now in early aluminum twilight, a poor enough sheen for many an aging lady but of double damage to Al's. Watch her twitch anxiously against a fey Silver Spring skydrop, head and taillights of rush hour commuterdom streaking the unlit green of her hair. She groans, a Lautrec ballerina in rumpled tutu. The delicately chevroned pirouette of her arch droops for want of illumination. She sighs. Ten more minutes. Five. Traffic blats by, bare bulbed apartment windows from the tacky brown boxes across Piney Branch Road almost out-gloom her. A nothing crabhouse sign down the block thumbs its yellow nose. Oh piss. She snaps gum, taps a baby blue toe. A paint flecked toe, a red Weejun with tape. She waits. Two minutes. Chevy pickups and Harriet Honda Vans unload obscene backfires at her feet even as cherrybomb rooster crows from old Saabs spit carbon from University Boulevard. No one notices her: one minute. A carfull of construction workers slides into the parking lot of Bambino's The Pizza People next door, a semi into a Citgo station nearby. There is laughter. Eight seconds... some shadowy figure in the outofsite shuffles toward a switch, extends a gloved finger, touches, probes... lovingly administers that great big daily ten-billion-watt goose.

The lady bows. Her lights are up, tiarra rotating, brakes and wags from the boulevard scream. She smiles. She is gracious, is again this evening proud Neon Queenie to a greater Washington, D.C. tract.

The whole world loves a beautiful sign, everybody knows that--everybody except official Montgomery County and Al Crowell, that is. Follow Al around his shop this busy Wednesday afternoon, back past shiny transmissions stacked in display more devotedly than sterling silverware at Galt's, follow his shoulder length brown hair and human dynamo pace if you can; Al helping a blonde customer out of an Oldsmobile, Al appreciating the gift of the young lady's tender years, Al off at a jog to the next car back through rock music blaring from what must be mammoth stereo speakers, rock 'n roll howling, Al trying to explain his sign, bellbottomed secretary catching his attention for his signature or a moment, spin her around, laugh, back to the office and that pure bred Afghan hound a somber tan sculpture of a watchdog at his desk. ... fellows from the shop ducking in heads, "He's here about our sign, huh ... like that sign, don't you." But Al never stopping for a second, a transmission here, one there, back to the phone turn down that music finished now, another fat deal squared away, turn it up Hey Al!

Finally Al slows a bit, sips a soda and asks me quite seriously whether I'm interested primarily in a political focus for my story, or an aesthetic one. Gee. I admit that when I'd stopped in it was for just aesthetic reasons. "Yeah, well right. People come in from all over the East coast to see that sign," Al says. "Now the county wants to take her down. Sign cost \$18,000 to build. It is a landmark. People meet under it, say 'meet you under Al's Transmission sign.' I already fought one court case about the

rotating top, won that. Not suppose to have any rotating signs in Montgomery County. And that baby's oversized too. Got to pull her down in 1976 unless something happens. I put a lot of money into that sign. Why pick on me? Why don't they get rid to the telephone poles or the power lines? We got our own little ghetto here on University Boulevard and they're worried about a goddam sign, my sign."

Al trots ahead, back through the shop, explaining on the run details of a Montgomery County ordinance which is complicated--- something about how the measurements of a free standing sign (any sign not attached directly to a building) must relate arithmetically to the number of square feet in a business lot. Or something. Anyhow, Al's sign is way over limit and has to go. Only reason he has until 1976 is because the thing cost so much. Originally, as an old Burger King sign, Folks and Miller signs of Gaithersburg designed and constructed it for a flat \$14,000. When Al took over the dead Burger King lot he had Folks and Miller redo their sign to the tune of four more grand.

"You can still see the King sitting in the car," adds Al's shop foreman, "but you can't see him so good at night."

The suit Al won against the county had to do with a minor technicality, something about legal procedure in the courtroom, but it upheld Al's right to keep the top of his sign rotating. "The whole thing, not just the top, used to blink on and off," Al reflects "but we cut that... got a little rough about three AM on people trying to sleep in the apartment building across the street."

That gentleman out at Montgomery County Court House in Rockville isn't bitter about having lost the Al's suit though, half because he knows Al's sign will come down in '76 anyway, and half because the glaring error of Al's sign is in what's stationary, not moving. Only a small part of the sign rotates, just enough to give the work a fine subtlety of motion. I mean obviously what bugs the county is the fact that there's this monstrous red and green and yellow and pink and baby blue and orange paragon of neon madness right there on Universtiy Boulevard, there in Silver Spring of all places, a classic example of neo-Las Vegas High Victorian Picturesque Eclecticism as the Art History boys would say, right on, but by god whatever, Montgomery County isn't going to stand for it. You can sense immediately from talking to this County clerk that if somebody actually bothered to go into all that early Tom Wolfe stuff about Dionysian Baroque streamline in American shopping center architecture, and how maybe it was good, this fellow wouldn't care. And there's no reason particularly why he should. Montgomery county has drafted one of the most radical sign laws in the country, and by in large it's a good law.

That gentleman should be proud of his law. Most of the horribly dull gasoline signs and tire changing signs and drugstore signs and every other unimaginative piece of neon and pseudo-neon junk that lines our highways will sooner or later have to go.

"This whole sign thing is bound to become a national trend," Al concedes, "but what really bothers me is that they're going after the easiest target first--the businessman. Me. And hell, I'm paying fifty thousand dollars a year in taxes to run that sign. What about beer cans? They're trying to tell me my sign is a blight on the environment; all I can say is just look at the environment around here."

Well Al, as you know, there's a review board for special cases in Montgomery County, a safety valve that has already let a couple of other people off the hook. Hardship cases, like Fat Man's Pizza on Georgia Avenue, whose business is so far out of sight from the road that he must have an illegal free standing sign. But right now there is no Montgomery County National Trust for special cases in the highway-fine-arts department. What's worse, other businesses around town seem generally to be toning down their neon. Hot Shoppes, who had one of the first glowing glittering neon wonders in the area, has forsaken their immortal waiter-hustling-to-your-car-with-tray-in-hand-swirl for a "classier" bulb-lit plate fork and knife pastiche. There's no curb service at most Hot Shoppes anymore, and by and large the big move in all drive-ins seems to be towards the McDonald's format. Hot Shoppes now is pushing Hot Shoppes Jr.s, and their people have come up with a nice free standing sign for that, a slightly expressionistic rendering of Pappy Parker's red pointed hat. . . not so nice as the Arby's Roast Beef Sandwich ten galloner, but in the chicken line, much more fiery and intimate than say, the Colonel Sanders' Kentucky Fried Chicken bucket--garish, rotating, and suggestive of nothing more appetizing than a revolving bathroom bowl.

Many Hot Shoppes Jr.s are trying out the old McDonald's winner of Let The Building Be Its Sign. This worked quite well for McDonald's in the fifties, but most franchises today seem to be foregoing those huge golden arches nobody will ever forget, probably for just that reason. McDonald's has already embossed the symbol of their product onto the collective cerebrum of an entire generation. Might as well let it ride. Now they also use a "classy" number, a free standing sign with modified boomerang arch, somehow vaguely reminiscent of the Mercedes Benz insignia.

A business new to the area which has gone all the way with McDonald's Let The Building Be Its Sign concept, is the Jack In The Box chain. Jack In The Box has put up a very interesting free stander, yes, quite delicately drawn and complementary to the rest of the lot, but it is in the design of the box-building itself where the final trick comes off. Bright yellow during the day, slightly more garish at night, Jack In The Box is totally functional in both burger sensuality and the cold cash suggestion of other goodies beneath that ochre lid. The entire building is one big yellow box, square, with . . . well, god knows what ready to jump out with burger delights and special foreign California-type treats.

But actually the finest example of McDonald's Let The Building Be Its Sign architecture I've encountered is as you might guess, not in this area, and no, not in California or Nevada either . . . outside of a little town in Northeastern Minnesota. There's this fish house off Highway 2 specializing in lake trout and perch and walleyed pike, which . . . well, the whole building, about a hundred and fifty by twenty feet of it, is one huge fish--a leviathan of a fish, shaped like a fish, painted like a fish, even smelling like a fish. You enter through the mouth, dine in the stomach, relieve yourself at the tail. A total fish experience.

Washington D.C. has nothing even remotely comparable to that Minnesota wonder of archisculptural design, but we do have several businesses which use free standing sculpture, (sculpture away from the building and not a sign in the strict sense of the word) quite nicely. One such is the Big Boy hamburger chain. All you have to do is glance once at the Big Boy statue outside most Big Boy restaurants to know you'll need a vanilla shake and an extra slice of cream pie with your burger. Big Boy is cuddly, inviting, and weirdly soft in his shiny plaster suit, but with a texture and fluidity of motion of a Claus Oldenburg. You'd be proud to have one standing in your living room.

Other business concerns using the sculpture technique, the old wooden Indian ploy from way back, are . . . oh, the Toys 'r Us folks out Rockville Pike with their huge orange giraffe neck and polka dot costumed elephants on Saturdays flagging down kids like Santa . . . that giraffe neck is pretty intriguing, but it can't hold up next to a really fine Big Boy. And of course there's the old Howard Johnson's sign still extant at some franchises, the one with the little bakers merrily bustling about up on that scabrous field of orange and green neon.

But dammit, Al's right about his sign, it is a landmark. . . here we can talk about other signs and sign architecture around the D.C. area and discuss them forever without ever hearing anyone express . . . well, the sort of thing Donald Archer, a catering truck driver from Mt. Rainier, has to say about Al's: "Just knowing Al's sign will be there next time I drive by makes me feel secure, sets me up for the day--that sign, maybe the most beautiful sign in the world, just staying right where it is not changing for anybody." Or what Dr. T. Peter Park of College Park feels about Al's lady: "She's a real pighanger, alright. I'd sort of hate to see her go. You know, in her way she's kind of pretty."

And like Al says, people from the Washington area do meet under his sign, with almost the same gusto and sense of style as say, Cafe Society used to meet under the clock at the Biltmore in New York, or Main Liners under the Wannamaker eagle in Philadelphia. Al's sign means something to people--to my under-thirty generation and the nineteen fifties approximately what the Willard Hotel's Peacock Alley (and knowledge that super figures like Charles Dickens and Jenny Lind had promenaded there) meant to the entire nineteenth century. The United States is the only country in the world which systematically destroys monuments to its culture, and now one more has been threatened.

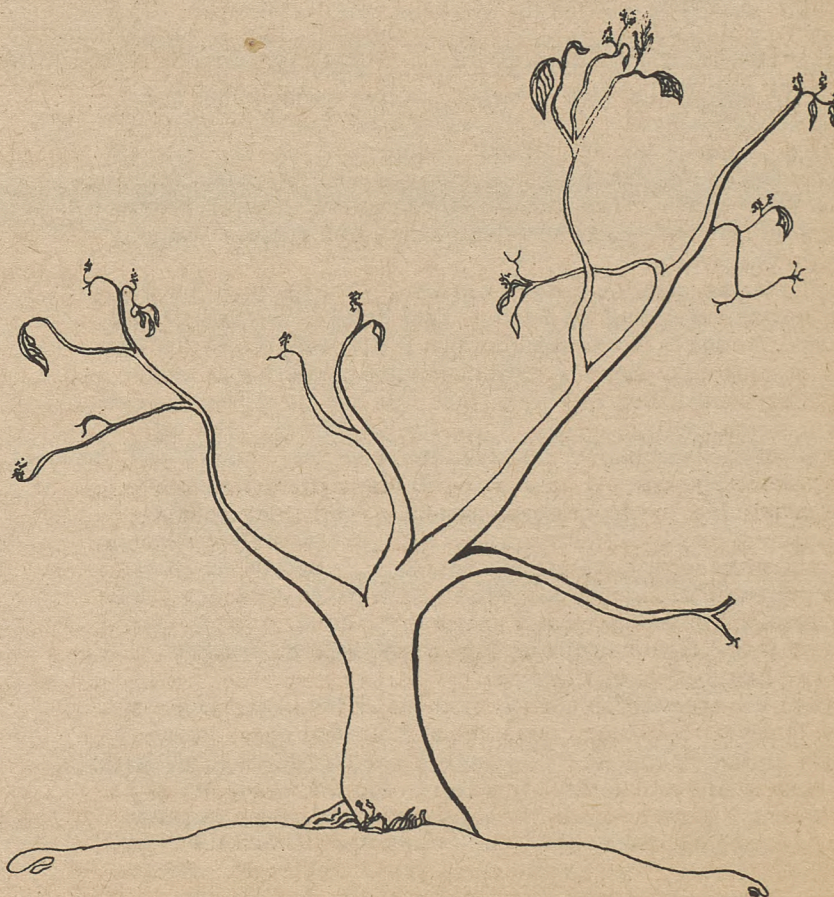
Perhaps Thomas Beech, night manager of the Langley Park Peoples sums it up best: "I remember Al's lot quite vividly as a Burger King stand. I was dating a girl out in this area at that time, and I had to pass the Burger King every night I drove out. The stench of burgers and french fries was overpowering in the summer, nauseating if you got caught at the light. To this day, everytime I stop in front of Al's sign I think I can smell that same smell. See the girl. And remember that special time of my life."

Al's point about the quality of his sign's environment is shorn up by the Proustian nature of Thomas Beech's statement, because . . . listen, nobody in his right aesthetic mind wants to see a sign like Al's in the middle of Yellowstone or even Rock Creek Park, but face up to it, Langley Park and Silver Spring are a far cry from any such sylvan wonders. Langley Park has no real landscape, what we're talking about is cityscape and an architecture endemic to the suburban megalopolis. Al's feisty sign greets travelers whipping off the beltway into the Silver Spring/Langley Park area not dissimilar to the way spires and towers of William Buckland's Annapolis warmed the thirsty eyeballs of sailors from another century on the Severn; or the manner in which window lights of Carter's Grove and Westover hailed travelers from England sailing up the James.

Al's sign is a symbol of everything growing up in the fifties around Washington D.C. means to people, and just as the firebombing of gothic cathedrals or the napalming of Buddhist temples is foolishly messing with primary architectural artifacts of a people's faith, so is the threatened condemnation of Al's Auto Transmission sign a dangerous and lamentable act. Why . . . just look at Al's sign here tonight this early spring evening, see the expressions on people's faces as they streak by--see them smile at her. She's . . . she's Darlene on the Mickey Mouse Club after school, she's those secret fantasies you always guarded for Annette. She's your first large draft alone at the Zebra Room or Teehan's, first time you had nerve enough to flash that fake I.D. in front of a date. She's . . . the party you were at the first time they played a Five Satins record, that guy in Rock Creek Park late one Saturday evening who dropped out of a tree onto the hood of your old man's Bonneville, while you were parking. She's the only girl in home room who had nerve enough to wear a leopard skin bra to school. She's the first time you ever drove a machine bad enough to fishtail out of Connecticut Avenue Shoppes and not get caught. She's . . . your first weekend on your own at Ocean City, your . . . she's Donald Duck and Huey, Duey, and Louie, just look at that car! for god's sake she's every Unca Scrooge comic you ever bought.

And more. Al's sign is religious, there's no way around it. See Al's customers pause reverently before the shrine, before chancing fate with rush hour traffic and the terrible uncertainties of another night, before even paying! America, you may tear down your Willard Hotels and Post Office Buildings of some other era, you've been doing it ever since you gave yourself birth. But you can't mess with a sign that . . . a sign which means . . . a lady who reminds us daily and nightly of everything we are . . . of the truth that meaningful religion begins at home, on the street, in the funky toejam psyche of each of us. Alone, together. And if for our generation--that one which happened to come of awareness in the fifties--gazing at Al's Auto Transmission sign is no less complicated an occupation than discovering the true identity of a Messiah to be somebody you've been drinking beer with all your life, then let it be. Let us have our symbols.

Montgomery County, take fair warning. This is no effete Sign for Sign's Sake polemic. We mean business. Save Al's sign!



COUNTERNOTES

BRUCE ROSENSTEIN

ARTHUR GEE-Tumbleweed TWS 101

It seems that there are so many solo singer/songwriters around today that most of them are being overlooked. There's James Taylor at the front, and an army of eminently talented singers right behind him, talented, entertaining, and often jobless. Of course, Kris Kristofferson was recently granted super-star, or near super-star status, and John Denver is just about there, but there are many others waiting in the wings. Don McLean seems like a shoo-in for super-stardom, and Jonathan Edwards there also.

So in the hope that they will not go overlooked, I'm gonna tell you about three fine singer/songwriters who have just released albums. No doubt the names Arthur Gee, George Gerdes and Paul Parrish don't ring bells in your head, but their new albums are well worth owning. As is the case with most solo performers, there are sidemen present on all three albums. On Gerdes' and Parrish's albums, the backup musicians are mostly in the background filling in and adding color and generally staying out of the way of the main man. Gee uses his backup musicians more prominently. This review isn't meant to be a comparison of the three albums; they're all rooted in separate styles, but their talents are worthy of exposure and none of them seem to be getting much.

Parrish is the most "Solo" of the three performers. His lyrics stand out more than anything else. His voice is fairly good but it's not going to knock anyone out. But I'm sure that other performers are going to start doing his songs. He can be light and funky, in a subdued way, as in "Jaynie," my own favorite. The song doesn't actually tell you anything, there are no hidden truths lurking in it, it's just a pleasure to listen to. So is "I Once Had A Dog," although there is somewhat of a message to this song, it's a familiar one, about how you should never count on keeping anything, whether it be a dog, a baby bird or a lover. It's the way he tells it which is also nice. And then he has a song like "Pink Limousine," and old timey song which is pure good fun and which packs about as much meaning as "Our House."

But he is equally as successful when he gets into the treatment of heavier themes, as in "Nathan" and "Many Years Ago." With the latter, it is hard to write a song about Jesus without it sounding corny, or fanatical, or preachy, or phony but Paul has written a perfectly unpretentious song which should be very popular if people ever get around to listening to it. "Nathan" uses an overworked theme of an outcast stranger coming to town, being scorned and eventually the town burns down. The lyrics are fairly interesting, and like the other material here, the melody is quite nice. Songs is an album worth searching around for. The songs will stay with you for a long time. You can tell Arthur Gee's album is going to be good from the packaging. The double fold, glossy cover has a nice photograph, the personnel on each of the cuts is listed on the inside cover, and when you take the album out of the jacket, a booklet drops out containing not only the lyrics but the music to all the songs. Gee has a deep, but fairly ordinary voice, and like George Gerdes, his harp playing sounds uncannily like Bob Dylan's 1966 harp playing; technically not outstanding but very gutsy and soulful. Gee's harp work is the best on "A. - L. F. A. L. F. A.," which stands for "Alone for a long time away." He also plays mouth harp, along with jaw harp, on "Plain Talk," one of the album's more memorable cuts. There is some nice country fiddling on this tune played by Steve Van Gelder. This is not a super name dropping session, I have never heard of any of the musicians listed in the credits. But they play just fine.

Their playing is best on the first two cuts on side two, "Country Fable," a short instrumental, with a recorder as the lead instrument, (And when was the last time you heard that?) This segues nicely into "Waterweight," a five minute song which gets into some involved, jazzy playing and also sports a good vocal by Gee. I guess that the biggest compliment that can be given to Arthur Gee is that his music is original and transcends musical boundaries and labels. There is not an out and out country song, or jazz song and you really can't call him a folk singer. He's just good, that's all.

And now we come to George Gerdes. I really think the guy should consider changing his name. That name... George Gerdes sounds like it would be the name of the dentist who lives next door to you, or maybe the butcher. What he most definitely is is a gifted, funky, good humored performer who has an original voice and a knack for writing lyrics. As in "Sweet anine," she just doesn't smoke a cigarette, "She sings some Broadway showstuff, stikes a match and takes a slow puff/ off a red lipstick stained white tipped L&M." And in the same song: "Well, she guzzles her Cinzano and she sits at the piano/ and she shelves her meaty sweet knees into a neat old cheesecake pose." And in the Beautifully touching portrait of "Gardenia Lady" come lines like "Hop scotch playing plaided black girl skipping in the air/ sticky fingered ice cream cone eating boy runs up the stairs/ Old Gardenia lady sitting very still aware."

The best song on this album, and one of the best songs I've heard in a while, is a tune called "Peas Porridge Hot," which is pleasant, catchy, funny and memorable. George plays great harp on this one, great as I described before, and the words are perfect. The chorus tells it all, "Peas porridge hot, peas porridge cold/ peas porridge in the pot, nine days old." A sample of the songs great lyrics: "You should come out to California, where I've been living in the trees/ Every night I pour my passion fruit juice, and then for dinner I eat peas". This song is wonderfully infectious, you're going to be singing along with him right away. Some of his songs, like the down and out, but with a sense of humor "Tequila Blue" are simple and straight-

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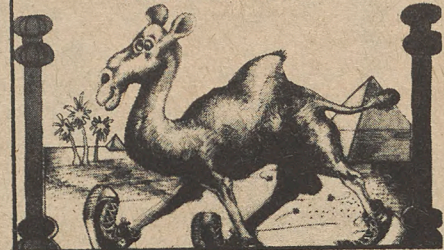
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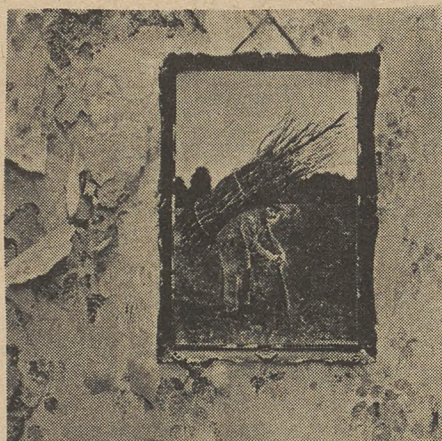
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forward, but then he also has songs like "The Backyard of Your Heart" (whaaat?) which you could dedicate your life to trying to figure out, although I'm sure George wouldn't want you to. All you have to do is listen to "Peas Porridge Hot" and you're hooked.

So all three of these albums are delightful in their own special way. In a way, if you like one, maybe you'll like all of them. Maybe no. It's worth a try.

MEDDLE-Pink Floyd- Harvest SMAS 832

The other night I thought it might be groovy to sit around and watch "The Avengers" on TV with the sound off and this new Pink Floyd album playing in the background, supplying a spur of the moment soundtrack. It really worked well. Mrs. Peel and Steed killed people and all to Pink Floyd's Space music, all the action on the screen was perfectly synchronized to the music. The sound fit in so well that sometimes I just assumed that the music was part of the show. Especially the beginning of "One of These Days". It took me two or three minutes before I realized that those strange sounds were coming from the record. I wouldn't try playing this album on just any TV show, though. Like, I don't think it would coordinate well with "Hollywood Squares", or "The Doris Day Show", or "Beverly Hillbillies" ... well, maybe the "Beverly Hillbillies". But on "The Avengers" or some old movie especially with the song "San Tropez", or some other highly evolved TV offering, it's really too much.

Pink Floyd makes real good music for whatever you're doing. They are the last and the best of bands pursuing the lost art of making good head music, music to sit down and get stoned to. There is nothing on Meddle which is as wonderfully freaky as "Interstellar Overdrive" from their first album, but you do have a 23 minute plus Space adventure with "Echoes", which is perfect Pink Floyd Other World Music. And on "Fearless", the lead guitarist sounds a lot like Richard Thompson, Britain's Best guitarist. He doesn't sound as good as Richard does but he does sound like him. You can get lost in the complexities of Pink Floyd's music and never find your way out. Pink Floyd is dedicated to messing up and rearranging your head. And usually when you're listening to them you just sit back and let them do as they wish, as everything goes floating around your brain, and your body hardly ever gets the message to move. You've just got to sit there and listen to it. Pink Floyd can take you on some neat little journeys with not too much of a guarantee that you'll come back the same. Go along and see what it's like, With "The Avengers" or without.

ROTTEN TO THE CORE-Crabby Appleton-Elektra EKS74106

After "Go Back" was a hit in 1970, Crabby Appleton was labeled as a "singles group" and their debut LP was ignored by many. In part, that was justified because the album was a rather uneven affair and the strongest thing was "Go Back". Now Rotten To The Core is out and not only does it stand out as an album, but it is also a collection of songs which would make excellent singles. "Lucy", the follow-up to "Go Back", the hit single that never was, is one of the many standout cuts on the album, a rowdy rock number that will have you up and dancing, as will just about everything on this album. Their current single, "Tomorrow's a New Day", a bright, bouncy tune is typical of the material on the album; Crabby Appleton knows how to get you up off your ass and keep you up. You'll find it impossible to stay in one place when you hear "Smokin In The Mornin'", a fast tune propelled by Casey Routz' fast, bouncing piano work, and lyrics like "I was smokin' this mornin' but I gave up cigarettes/Just livin' in the smoke is giving me

my chance to forget". And there's also a couple of great country jobs, "One More Time", a wild hoedown with David Nelson of the New Riders of the Purple Sage on mandolin and Byron Berline of the Flying Burrito Brothers on fiddle. "Paper To Write On" is hilariously appealing; how many bands could get away with lyrics like "Paper to write on, ink for the pen/ I will send you sweet letters, till you're with me again." "Gonna Save You (From That)" has some explosive percussion from Flaco Falcon on conga and timbale. Flaco is currently touring with Dave Mason's new band.

Catchiness goes hand in hand with heaviness in Crabby Appleton. These are songs which stay with you, songs you go around humming as you go about your daily affairs. "Lucy" and "Smokin' In The Mornin'" are songs that you just can't get out of your head, and that's good. Michael Fennelly is the guiding light behind the band, the composer of all the songs, lead singer and lead guitarist. But Crabby Appleton is a tight band, and not just the personal vision of one man. Falcon adds tasty percussion effects, Hank Harvey's booming bass lends steady support to the sound, and Foutz' great keyboard playing lends itself perfectly to the group's catchy, flashy style. All but one of the songs on this album are three minutes and under, perfect hit single time. These songs together make Rotten To The Core one of them could be hit singles, and they could do quite a bit towards brightening AM radio, and it could sure use it.

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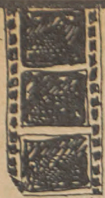
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AT THE MOVIES

Washington Reviewing Society

Memories of Underdevelopment, a Cuban film, directed by Tomas Gutierrez Alea. 95 minutes. One of 21 films in the American Film Institute's current presentation Festival Choice. To be shown once only in the Washington area, Thursday, December 2, at 6:30 pm, at AFI's L'Enfant Plaza Theatre.

Memories of Underdevelopment, a post-revolutionary Cuban film directed by Tomas Gutierrez Alea redeems the promises made by such "revolutionary" films as The Battle of Algiers, La Guerre Est Finie and Z.

That is, in a brilliant, subtle, allusive, and most original way, it helps us to understand what we mean as human beings in the historical context of the Cuban revolution, the Kennedy years and the emergence of the Third World; it strips these concepts of propaganda and redefines them in terms of our individual humanity; it reveals to us the true meaning of what it means to be an American by showing us the life of a Cuban in the Cuba of 1962.

For a rare moment, through the power of this unusual film, we are able to glimpse the future without the blinders of our nationalistic egos, a glimpse that is made possible by the clarity with which Memories examines our immediate past.

Memories is the account of a month or so in the life of an upper-class Cuban named Sergio, a 38 year old intellectual who lives off the compensation money paid to him by the Castro government after seizing an apartment house he owned. The time is 1962. The film begins about a month before the Cuban missile crisis and ends just on the eve of the US naval blockade of Cuba in October of 1962.

Through the use of a brilliant stream-of-consciousness technique, we become Sergio, the expatriate-with-a-country, a man who is "neither a revolutionary nor a counter-revolutionary", an alienated husband who has just sent his wife off to Miami, a man whose peers are also leaving the country, a human being who is pondering the meaning of his life in terms of an "underdeveloped island", the Revolution, the United States, Kennedy, the Third World, the Bay of Pigs, the Missile crisis—all of which are stations along Sergio's private way of the Cross.

His guides along the way are the heroines of his sexual realities and fantasies—his wife, who, through flashbacks, is shown at her worst moments during their last epic battle which Sergio managed to get on tape, a comely Baptist cleaning woman—he fantasizes baptizing her in a wild Cuban stream—and his current mistress, a working class girl he picks up on the street, quickly tires of, and just as quickly becomes embroiled with a tragicomic embroglio involving outraged parents, lurid accounts of despoiled virginity, a court trial where charges of rape and seducing a minor are shrilly heard scenes which are reminiscent of the finest and wildest scenes of Italian cinema, particularly those involving Sicilian revenge for injured honor.

The mood of the film is elegaic, restrained, ironic—and, to use an overworked word, existential. Sergio is an existential man in the Sartrian sense, a man who is more sustained by his despair than he is by hope, a man who is almost more interested in the meaning of meaning than he is in the meaning of life.

This existential tone is sustained both by the script and the images. In a literary sense, the film is European in influence, the Europe of Graham Greene and Camus, as seen through the eyes of a Latin such as Jorge Luis Borges. Unfortunately, I do not know who wrote the script, and not speaking Spanish, I haven't any real idea of its substance, but, regardless, I could sense that it is one of the richer scripts of any movie, and undoubtedly, a work of literary art on its own. Using the device of an interior monologue (as well as some dialogue) that is, a voice-over of Sergio's voice as he goes about the business of his daily life, it has profound things to say about a bewildering variety of subjects, ranging from the effects of the tropics on a man's development, "I matured too early... was a habitue of whorehouses by 13... now I feel like a rotten fruit..." to the philosophical meaning of the Revolution, to how the Revolution transposed the class role in Cuba, and so on, about every facet of Sergio's public and private life.

On a visual level, the tone is set by Antonioni's lexicon of images on the one hand, and by a pioneering use of montage, on the other hand. With some of Antonioni's exquisite, intuitive feel for camera movement, Gutierrez Alea's camera eye sets Havana as the background of the film while at the same time, during appropriate moments of Sergio's interior monologue, he splices in newsreel footage, real and simulated, as well as still photographs, TV and newspaper accounts of contemporary events all of which combine into a synthesis of public event and private fantasy that gives Memories its unique historical relevance within a framework of personal meaning.

One visual device I particularly admired: in the simulated newsreel sequences, he fogs the film so that all the highlights are coated with a gray tone, a technique that has the effect of putting one at a visual distance, one that approximates the temporal distance of the events being depicted.

The end result of Gutierrez Alea's skill as a director is that every scene in the film presents to us a number of simultaneous levels of meaning. Past, present and future seem inexplicably mixed, and private and public worlds continually merge, separate and merge again. Concept and actuality frequently become one, and the non-sequitur, examined again a moment later, becomes the sequitur.

For example, a scene set at Hemingway's villa, just outside of Havana. In this scene, Sergio and his young mistress take a tour through the house which has become a memorial shrine for the American writer. On one level, we are treated to a straightforward, if ironical, presentation of the artifacts of a shrine: Alea reveals, in meticulous detail, Hemingway's books, clothing,

the animals he shot, his typewriter, his study, all of which are described by a guide, a black man Hemingway more or less adopted as a youth. On another level, the scene develops Sergio's growing disenchantment with his mistress—as they progress from room to room, he gradually manages to lose her. At the same time, the scene is a subtle and profound essay on Hemingway himself. There is a brief and disturbing moment of speculation on the meaning of personal slavery, as Alea examines the life of the guide adopted by Hemingway. The scene prompts one to reflect on the necromantic aspects of shrines; I was reminded of another shrine to Hemingway, the bar in Key West where Hemingway liked to drink after fishing trips, a place that seems to seal off memories of good times in the past in a lugubrious web of the present; although the place is a functioning bar, there was a silence there I've never encountered in any other watering hole, and brooding over the assembled cast of Papa worshippers was a large photo of Papa himself, wearing a displeased smile.

Alea is a director who is not afraid to show his influences—indeed, in a number of scenes, he seems to pay homage to them, introducing them, not as slavish influences, but as old friends who, in a sense, helped him to make the film. Bunuel seems to be looking over his shoulder in an early scene where Sergio dresses up in his wife's clothes and plays back the tape of their last quarrel; a set-piece in a pre-Revolutionary Havana whorehouse has the spirit of Fellini's childhood fantasies, and, there is Antonioni's pervasive presence which is felt in many places throughout the film, particularly in the L'Avventura-like ending. I was also reminded of another less-successful film, Zabriskie Point which, like Memories, enabled one to step out of one's self for a moment and think of what it means to be an American.

The sound was brilliantly done, adroitly mixing voice-over with dialogue, narration and natural sound. The acting was of a high level. Sergio was played by Sergio Corrieri, an actor who has a faint resemblance to Dirk Bogarde.

About the only complaint I have about the entire film is the inept title, which if the film is commercially released, should keep away film patrons in droves. It either sounds like a piece of USIA doggerel featuring Senator Fulbright reciting table after table of statistics or the reminiscences of Raquel Welch after her silicone injection treatments.

* * *

This review may appear after the one Washington showing of Memories of Underdevelopment on Thursday, December 2, at 9:00 pm. As far as I know, it is not scheduled for commercial release. In any event, I thought it important to review the film in case it is shown again in the area. It is a film worth waiting for, worth seeking out, and worth demanding, if it is not released. I certainly hope Michael Webb, AFI programming manager, re-schedules it if no one else will.

Memories is but one of 21 films being shown by the American Film Institute during their series called Festival Choice, some of which will have already been shown by the time this article appears. The remainder are well worth seeing. All of the films were shown at various international film festivals, and most have not been commercially released in this country.

AFI's theatre is cheerful and well-designed for film-viewing and is located in Washington's science-fiction set, L'Enfant Plaza. It is surprisingly easy to get to, and once there, parking is next to the theatre in a well-lighted patrolled parking lot.

Michael Webb and Company have been presenting Washington's most intelligent film programming for some time now, and, if for no other reason than bringing us Memories for one night, they deserve good patronage.

A brief synopsis of some of the remaining films in Film Festival: Showing with Memories of Underdevelopment on Thursday, December 2 is a Yugoslavian film called The Role of My Family in the World Revolution, described as "a madcap political satire satire". After the performance, which starts at 10:00 pm, the director will be present to answer questions. On Friday, December 3, at 8 pm, AFI will show Bushman, followed by the Arp Statue, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Bushman is directed by David Schikele, and according to the AFI handout, "describes the misadventures of a young Nigerian... who comes to America for the first time." 8 pm, Saturday, December 4, a remake of the classic, Abel Gance's Bonaparte and the Revolution. On Sunday, December 5th, two films from Denmark and Sweden, The Bookseller who Gave Up Bathing and The Red Mantle. On Monday, December 6th, at 8, a Chilean film which sounds very interesting, The Jackal, which "is an incredibly realistic re-enactment of a famous Chilean murder case." Tuesday, December 7th, at 8, Herostratus, a British film, the first twenty minutes of which we managed to see before having to leave the AFI previews. On the basis of those twenty minutes, it seemed very pretentious. At any rate, it is about "a confused young failure" who persuades an advertising firm to promote his suicide. Wednesday, December 8, at 8 pm, a Russian version of King Lear. Thursday, December 9, Night of Counting the Years, an Egyptian film about the archeological discovery of the forty royal mummies at Thebes, and Mon Oncle Antoine, which is supposed to be the finest film ever made in Canada. Night begins at 6:30, and Mon Oncle at 9:30. On Friday, December 10th, the last day of Festival Choice, AFI is screening Donkey's Skin, starring Catharine Deneuve wearing same (6:30 pm) and Chekov's Uncle Vanya in a Russian version which begins at 9:30 pm.

Mark Power

The Arp Statue is a very strange and beautiful English film. Produced, directed and written by Alan Sekers, it is composed entirely of black and white still photographs by David Cobbold. A moving picture where the only movement is in the dissolve from one beautiful still into another. The Arp Statue is a real story about a successful English fashion model, Mel Lamb, whose arm is horribly mangled when she reaches in to pet a zoo tiger she believes to be tame. Mel Lamb plays herself in the film as do all the other characters.

Before the film started we were warned not to be put off by its initial slowness because the initial dullness was necessary for an understanding of the whole. This was probably a good thing because it kept me watching even though in the beginning with all the stills of this beautiful model and her bland beautiful model life with voice-over meaningless conversation all I could think of is those European comic books that are composed of photographs. In time the photographs, melting one into another, became very compelling and somehow lovelier than actual movement -- like a dance. The one love scene in the film was far more beautiful and erotic than any I have seen in a standard film. Image upon image of naked flesh twisting and turning and perfectly paced.

Somehow The Arp Statue is a very inspirational film, but it is so well made that it is without the embarrassment that most films with a "message" tend to have for me. In the beginning Mel Lamb is merely a beautiful object living off her looks and refusing to give any more than her presence. In one strange sequence she is on assignment posing for some high fashion photographer amid the chaos of Belfast, smiling her model smile as demanded -- just doing her job while the voices of passers by discuss what's happening in real life in this battered city. She will not reveal herself in any way.

After her accident, when the doctors feel her arm has healed enough for her to leave the hospital she goes to recuperate in the south of France with the family of a metal craftsman she had visited earlier in the film. Mel Lamb keeps her mutilated arm covered and the horror of her injury is revealed only once to the audience when she exposed it to herself in a mirror after being tormented by the sounds of the rest of the people at the villa playing in the swimming pool. Finally the old woman of the house tells Mel she cannot bear her silence, her total passivity any longer. She says they don't need anymore statues in the house and that she has asked Francois Hugo, the craftsman, to allow Mel to visit with him at his studio. Mel asks what can there possibly be for her to do there. The woman tells her to go and watch.

Francois Hugo tells Mel about his work -- that his only life is to try and create as perfectly as he can -- and we see images of him with Mel working at his side as we hear his voice. He tells her about a figure he once worked on from a design of his friend, the sculptor, Jean Arp. Everytime he would finish

the figure it would split down one side or the other. He formed that one piece over 200 times until he finally understood the stress that was causing it to split. For over a year he did the same thing until he learned how it could be done perfectly. Francois Hugo feels he would die if he stopped trying to create the perfect. And it is not one bit corny. This man, speaking his own words, is so intelligent and so honest and so open that one has not the slightest desire to giggle nervously. The film ends with the same images of Mel and the old man in his studio that we saw in the very beginning without knowing what they were about.

The Arp Statue will be shown on December 3rd at the AFI theater and you should try to see it there because it's very doubtful that such a low-key film will even be distributed commercially.

E. J.

MONDAY NIGHT WITH BRAD BLANTON AND FRIENDS

A good many of the newly popular psychotherapists possess the charisma of a visiting evangelist or rock superstar; as do William Schutz of Esalen, J. L. Moreno and the late Fritz Perls, among others. And their practice of therapy can be fairly judged as performance, for it is through their intricate mental dances that their therapeutic purposes are achieved.

"Part-preacher, part-psychotherapist", Brad Blanton of the Quest Center began an eight-week series of Gestalt workshops last week with a nicely understated performance, ideally suited to introduce the un-initiated into a philosophical search through the ideas of Yaqui medicine men, Yoga, R. D. Laing and Fritz Perls. Don't let me mislead you into thinking this is a philosophy course, though. It's a therapeutic show and the audience is drawn into the performance through exercises and games in ways that should reveal to participants some useful knowledge about their minds and bodies.

The goal of therapy now, for the average person, is to provide a force that teaches people how to better center their lives. The therapists who practice these techniques, and teach them, are not Olympian figures who hide out of sight of their patients who recline on a couch but are fellow seekers who join with others in a search for a fully realized life.

That search is precisely what Brad promises in his evenings; from the evidence of the first evening, my expectation is that participants on these Monday evenings will be safely conducted through a variety of techniques which will sooner or later provide something for everyone, perhaps a revelation on the way.

There are many paths, some say; Brad and his visiting friends may provide a glimpse down a few. His evenings also promise to be reassuring, not the heavy dramatic confrontational experiences that so many beginners dread in the new psychology.

Unfortunately, these evenings aren't free; then, fortunately, the they're not expensive. They're held at 8 pm Mondays, at Grace Church, 1041 Wisconsin Avenue, NW. for \$3 an evening.

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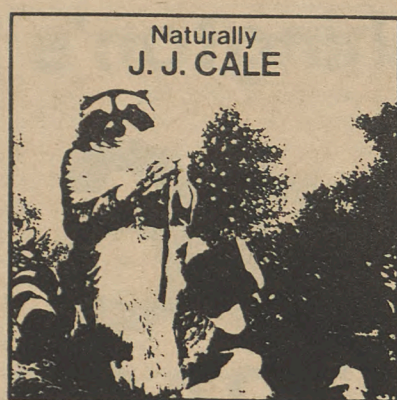
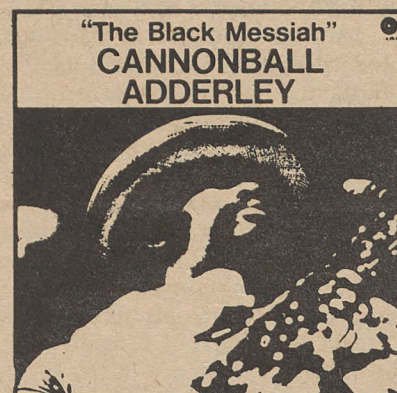
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ARENA STAGE and KREEGER THEATRE - Phone 638-6700

Arena and the Kreeger guarantee student admissions with reservations made 48 hours in advance, unless the show is selling out. Tickets cost \$2.60 with a student I. D. required for each ticket; the tickets may be picked up any time from the time the reservation is made till half an hour before show time. In addition, if the show is sold out, students at the box office will be guaranteed standing room.

The Arena theatres also offer discounts for student groups and groups of elderly people, with bus transportation provided, any night except Friday or Saturday. For more information, call Suzanne Roschwalb at 347-0931.

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The student price at all performances is \$2.00 and phone reservations are accepted; show your I. D. at the ticket office. There are also non-student discount plans ranging from \$2.50 a ticket to \$3.00, depending on the night of the week the group visits.

The Folger is also planning to offer a student subscription plan for the next three shows. Call Ludy Blundon at 546-6909 for information.

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FORD'S THEATRE - 347-6260

Policies fluctuate at Ford's, depending on the show, but for Mother Earth it was something like this: Student discounts were good for previews and matinees, and reservations could be made through Ticketron. With a student I. D., all tickets were \$3.00. In addition, Ford's offers varying discounts for senior citizens, military personnel and children. If there are tickets fifteen minutes before curtain time, student rates prevail for student I. D. s.

For the ecology conscious, tickets were \$3.00 for all persons who arrived at the theatre on bike, with bike parking provided. In addition, Ford's offers all persons who take jars, bottles, etc. to the Washington Recycling Center in Rock Creek Park \$3.00 tickets. It would probably be wise to check on their current policies.

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The Kennedy Center had a much vaunted project announced whereby they held a certain number of tickets aside for students and poor people who would pay half-price for whatever ticket they got. Students who have talked to me have had little luck making the system work.

Theoretically, a student takes an I. D. to the information desk and fills out a form, then takes the form to a ticket window and buys a ticket. It may have changed by now. At any rate, phone information is unreliable and you'll have to visit the Center to find out. People who go to buy tickets are entitled to half an hour free parking in the Center garage. Have the ticket seller stamp your parking ticket.

* * * *

NATIONAL THEATRE

The National doesn't offer student discounts, but it does offer perhaps the most dependable theatre bargain in the city. The 356 seats in the upper balcony are all sold for the same price. For the current Fun City, that means tickets Monday through Thursday and for matinees cost only \$2.50 each. In addition, some shows offer group discounts.

Achief advantage of the National policy is that reasonably priced seats can be reserved well in advance.

* * * *

OPEN STAGE - Phone 244-6333

Prices at Stage One are certainly reasonable for everyone. General admission is \$2.00 and student tickets are only \$1.00 each. A good price for some earnest theatre experiments.

* * * *

THEATRE LOBBY - Phone 393-5818

Student discounts available every night, but prices vary according to which night it is; call for information.

WASHINGTON THEATRE CLUB - 466-8860

Although Theatre Club accepts no advance reservations for student tickets, student tickets are available almost any evening at certain time for \$2. Be warned, however, that the Saturday night 9 o'clock show is usually sold out.

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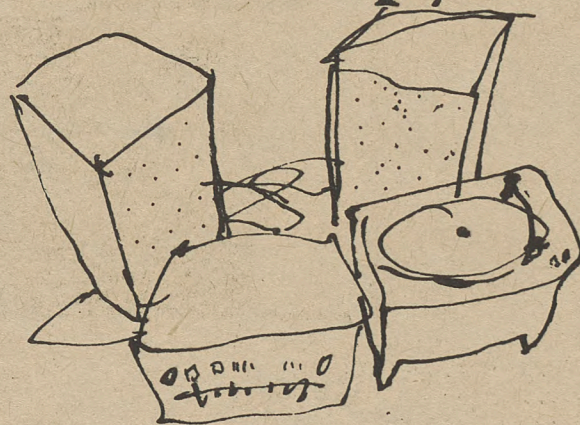
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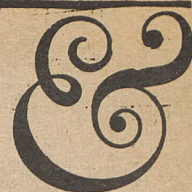
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